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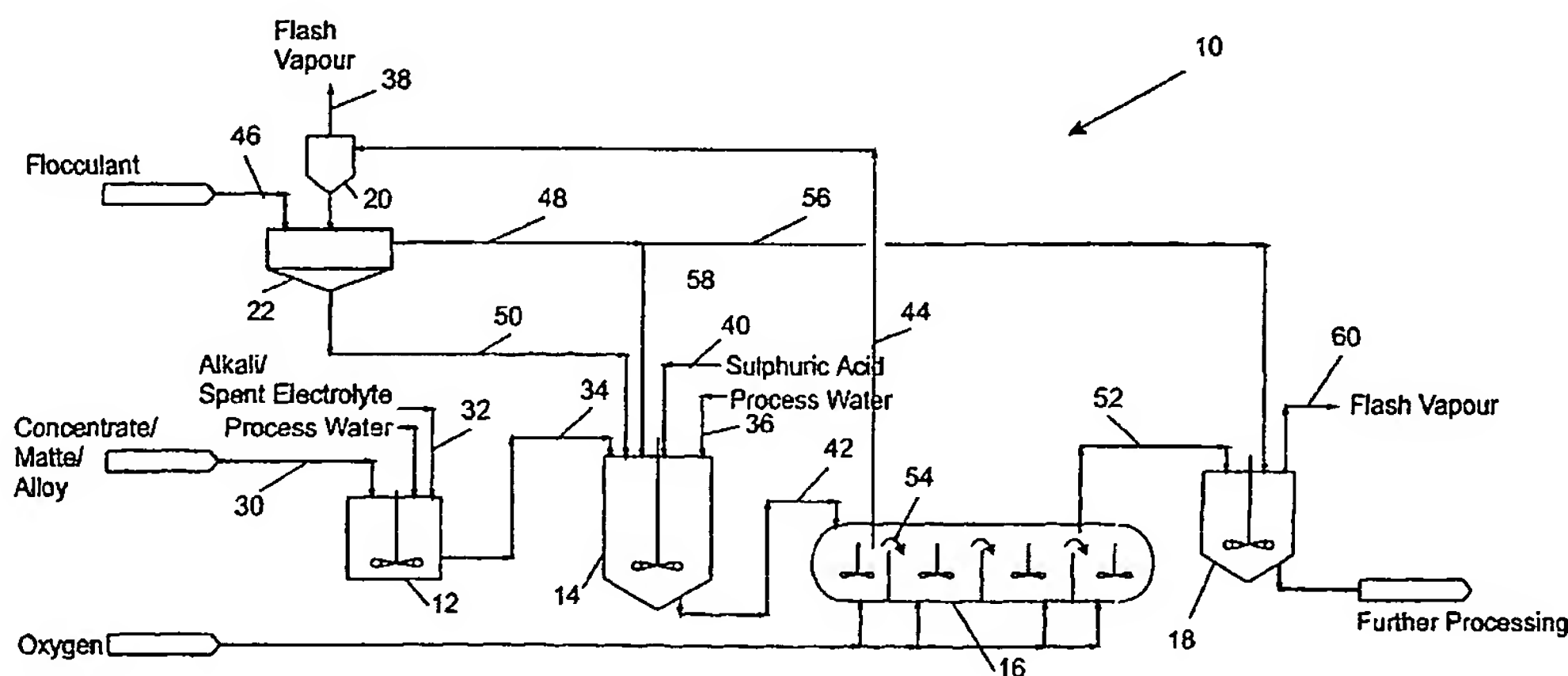
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(54) Title: EXOTHERMIC PRESSURE LEACH AUTOCLAVE CIRCUITS



(57) Abstract: The efficiency of an exothermic autoclave leach process is increased by increasing the retention time of the solids fraction in the feed slurry over that of the liquid fraction. This is achieved by flashing the contents of the first oxidative autoclave compartment to a flash vessel, with the underflow therefrom passing to a thickener and the underflow from the thickener being fed to the autoclave feed tank or any tank upstream of the feed tank. Exothermic heat generated in the first compartment of the autoclave is abstracted in the flashing process. Additionally portions of the overflow from the thickener are returned to the feed tank and fed to the autoclave discharge tank.